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DCI BRIEFING FOR SENATOR RUSSELL

19 May 1964

THAILAND

- I. The Thai Government has continued to operate smoothly since Prime Minister Sarit died last December.
 - A. Prime Minister Thanom Kittikachorn is closely following Sarit's pro-West policies. At the same time, he is consolidating his own power position.
 - B. Coup rumors occur frequently, however. We are likely to hear more of these rumors now that the mourning period for Sarit is over.
 1. Top military and political figures are maneuvering behind the scenes. Cabinet or military command changes could come at any time.
 2. The names of Interior Minister Praphat, Lt. General Krit Siwara, commanding officer of the key First Army located in the Bangkok area, and General Chitti, former army deputy chief, are heard most often as coup leaders.

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3. A coup de force by Prime Minister Thanom is also possible. He could force a sweeping change of personnel --cabinet positions and senior military transfers--held over from Sarit's government.
- C. No new subversive efforts from either inside or outside the country have been reported. Thai authorities are pessimistic, however, over the current situations in Laos and in South Vietnam.
 1. They have taken some steps to improve control measures along the Laotian border. They have also been coordinating policies and plans with other SEATO members, particularly with us.
 2. Thai officials believe that current Communist operations in Laos are related to a normal pre-rainy season push to jockey for position.
 3. If current Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese intentions are, in fact, to drive to the Mekong, the Thai Government says it is ready to "go with us" in taking any necessary action.

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